

A DREAM OF LIFE.

A Drama,

IN THREE ACTS.

By W. WATTS, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF

*"An Irish Engagement," "The First Night of my
Wedding," "Which is the King," &c.*

FIRST PRODUCED AT THE

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Produced at the ROYAL MARYLEBONE THEATRE, on
Monday, February 26th, 1849.

Time of Representation, One Hour and Thirty Minutes.

Henry Bertram	..	..	MR. DAVENPORT
Grace Bertram	..	..	MISS FANNY VINING
Bertram's Children	..		MASTER and MISS FEIST
Lawyer	..	..	MR. SMYTHERS

CHARACTERS IN THE DREAM.

Sir George Wormley	..		MR. TINDELL
Henry Bertram	..	..	MR. DAVENPORT
Billy Swizzle	..	..	MR. J. HERBERT
Gregory Growise	..	..	MR. J. SAUNDERS
Jack Bully	.	..	MR. MORRISON
Landlord	..	..	MR. MORRIS
Keeper	..	..	MR. MORLAND
First Officer	..	..	MR. FREDERICKS
Bertram's Children	..		MASTER and MISS FEIST
Mrs. Growise	..	..	MISS F. HAMILTON
Grace Bertram	..	..	MISS FANNY VINING
Susan	..	..	MISS M. OLIVER

The Scenery by MESSRS. DAYIS and GORDON.

The Appointments by MR. E. BRADWELL.

The Dresses by MR. BROWN and Assistants.

A DREAM OF LIFE.

ACT I.—SCENE I.

Interior of Bertram's House wretchedly furnished.

On L. a bed made on the floor, a window over—on R. a door, c. chairs, tables, &c., the whole denoting extreme poverty.

GRACE BERTRAM and Children discovered in Picture.

Grace. In vain I watch, midnight is at hand, and still he comes not; how wearily the time creeps on, minutes are hours, hours ages. The footsteps of each passer by are echoed by the beating heart, and memory recalls the sound of those so loved and sighed for. And when he comes, oh heaven! He that I so loved, worshipped, and adored—he that was once all love and goodness, honored and esteemed by all, is now, I dare not think on't. [*Weeps.*]

Child. Dear mother, pray don't cry,

Grace. That I can weep my child, thank heaven! These tears alone prevent my heart from breaking, when thoughts of other days—of days of love and happiness—of thoughts and wishes centred in each other: when from our peaceful home, was banished far all care, kind fortune showered down blessings on us—each hour was crowned with joy—but soon, alas, the charm was broken, the demon of destruction took possession of his soul, and he was lost—lost!

Child. Mother—what demon?

Grace. The evil spirit that is loose among mankind; in every street he has erected palaces; open portals beckon to the weak; gorgeous splendor tempts him in; and there, wife, children, friends, honor, the dearest ties on earth, are all forgotten; and man, proud man, nature's most

noble and glorious work, sinks beneath the level of the brute creation, and is lost in the abyss of ruin and desolation.

Child. But father is not lost, mother?

Grace. Grant heaven he is not. His love of drink becomes each day more powerful. His home's deserted; his nights passed midst revel and debauchery; his money squandered; his wife and children left to starve, whilst he has sunk beneath the lowest of the poor. My dear children, what may be your fate, should it please the great controller of our destiny to take me from you. But for you sweet innocents, long since I would have lain me down and died—but thy sweet helplessness makes me live on—hope on. Thou art the only prop that keeps together my frail existence. [*Weeps*]

Child. Don't cry, dear mother, father will soon be home, pray don't cry for him.

Grace. 'Tis for thee I weep: I shudder to think what the pernicious example of the father may teach the children. Each day brings with it greater misery! The end heaven only knows! Is't possible that man, with the example of so many of his fellow-creatures constantly before his eyes can, day after day, give himself up unto the arch fiend, and slowly, though surely, dig his own ignominious grave! Hark! Footsteps—'tis he at last! [*BERTRAM sings without*] That voice! How once I doated on its tones; but now maddened by liquor, it rings a death knell in mine ears.

Enter BERTRAM, drunk, R. H. D.

Ber. How now, wife? Still up? How's that? Get you to bed!

Grace. Bertram!—Harry!—I pray you think.

Ber. Think! ha! ha! Think! none but fools do that! Think of thee and thy puling brats. Think! no, I drown all thoughts. Drink the heaven of man's existence.

Grace. Rather say, the hell! Look on these children, they are thine, thy flesh and blood; with the example you set them, what may they become?

Ber. I care not, don't preach, wife. I'm in no humour for your sermons. Get me some drink, do you hear some drink—I'm parched—choaking!

Grace. There, then, drink. [*Gives jug.*]

Ber. 'Tis water! fool, why do you give me this?

Grace. The sweetest drink on earth, all I and my children have had, therefore it must serve thee.

Ber. Are you mad? Get me some drink, I say! woman, do you hear?

Grace. I hear. The money.

Ber. Money! I have none. Get some on trust. Ber, borrow, steal—I care not.

Grace. No, husband, no! you shall not through my instrumentality rob the industrious tradesman, who, by fair and honest means, endeavours to support himself in respectability. Copy him, and day and night I'll toil for you! You shall not have a wish unsatisfied—think of your present life, look around upon the wretched home to which you are reduced, awake from this delusion, think of what you were, what you now are—and what the end must be!

Ber. Silence, I say! Do as I bid you—I'll not be trifled with—get me some drink!

Grace. I will not.

Ber. You will not! Then thus I'll stop thy canting breath for ever. [*Seizes her by the throat.*] Drink, I say! drink!

Grace. You will not kill me? For mercy sake, my children—Bertram—

Ber. Wilt do my bidding?

Grace. Never—kill me first!

Child. Don't hurt mother! pray don't!

Ber. Stand off, you whelps! Now, thou canting hypocrite, I have thee—I feel thy warm blood tingle 'gainst my fingers, but will not slay thee. There, go, and learn obedience. [*Throws her from him on the ground.*]

Grace. [*Clasping children.*] Rash man, would you call down the vengeance of heaven upon thy head?

Ber. Or of hell! I care not. Silence thy babbling tongue, or you 'scape not again so cheaply. Lie there, and die! aye, die if thou wilt—yes, do you hear, die! die! Ha! ha! ha! ha! [*Throws himself on bed.*]

Grace. Fear not my children, he will not harm me. He bids me die! who like me would wish to live? Hush! he sleeps—come, my sweet innocents, together we will offer up our prayers, that he may see the wickedness of his present life and turn therefrom—softly—softly. [*GRACE and CHILDREN kneel cautiously on bed, and hold up their hands in prayer over BERTRAM.*] Grant, oh, most High, that he may see the wickedness of his present

course, and that his guardian angel may watch over and protect him! Heaven ne'er refuses the prayers of the young and innocent!

[*They bend over BERTRAM and clouds descend.*]
Slow music, and change to

SCENE I. OF THE DREAM.

Interior of a Low Public House.

Company seated at various tables.—Door and window in C.—BILLY SWIZZLE and others drinking R.—HARRY BERTRAM and JACK BULLY playing cards L.

CHORUS.

Come drink, boys, come drink,
 We have no time to think
 Of this world, its cares and its woes;
 So let's drink and be gay,
 And let come what may,
 The present we'll catch as it goes.

Swiz. Bravo, my lads! a song after my own heart, exactly my own sentiments. Drink while you may, and let to-morrow take care of itself—so, therefore, I'll have another pint. Here, Susan!

Enter SUSAN.

My dear little Susan, draw me another pint o'heavy, and I'll reward you with a kiss.

Susan. Keep your kisses for the beer-barrel, Master Billy, I want none of em. [Exit L.]

Swiz. Kiss a beer-barrel, well if ever. That's just the sort of wife I should like.

Enter SUSAN with beer, L.

Susan. There's your beer.

Swiz. And there's your kiss. [Goes to kiss her.]

Susan. Not so quick, sir. I'll not encourage idleness in any one. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, nothing but drink, drink, drink, from morning till night. And there's Harry Bertram, too, always gaming and drinking, instead of attending to his wife and family! I'm ashamed of you all.

Ber. Attend to your own business, leave mine to me.

Swiz. That's a pretty bit of sentiment. After that I must have a kiss.

Susan. There, take it. [*Slaps his face.*] [*Exit, L.*

Swiz. Well, I never! what a spitfire! She's worse than my first love. You never heard about her, did you?

Com. Never! let's have it.

Ber. Curses light upon it, your luck carries all before it.

Jack. Ha! ha! better luck next time, my boy; come, try again.

Ber. I'll play though the devil himself were against me.

Swiz. That's the effect of gaming. Well, as I was a saying, when I was a young innocent youth of sixteen, I fell in love, with such a beauty, and no mistake, and didn't she love me? Oh! my wig, not at all. But she'd got a precious cross old beggar of a father, and he wouldn't consent to our being married; no, wouldn't hear of it.

Com. I don't wonder at that.

Swiz. Well, so we determined to run away with one another; the night was fixed, I borrows a shay cart, and waits at the appointed spot—out she comes, all in white, I shoves her into the cart, and away we go—all this time she never spoke a word—that's modesty thinks I, and drives on like a good'un, till I got daylight—and then, when I went to steal a kiss from my adorable—I found, instead of my lovely Polly, who do you think?

Com. How can we tell? Who?

Swiz. Why, I'm blest, if it wasn't her old grandmother—blind and deaf. The old beggar of a father had discovered our rig, and sent her instead; so I was obliged to take her back, and preciousy I got laughed at, and no mistake.

Com. Ha, ha, ha! a capital joke.

Swiz. No joke for me, though; for after that, the boys used to call me Grandmother Swizzle, so I took to swizzling to drown dull care, and there's nothing like it. Winter or summer, day or night, merry or sad, early or late—why, I say [*Sings.*]

Let's drink and be gay,
By night or by day;
Who cares a button whatever they say,
While you've money to pay,
You should never say nay,
But fill up your glasses, and
Swizzle away.

Ber. That trick is mine.

Jack. 'Tis mine!

Ber. 'Tis mine, by hell!

Jack. 'Tis false! I swear 'tis mine.

Ber. Liar and cheat.

Jack. Cheat! That's my answer. [*Strikes him.*]

Ber. Coward! I'll have your life's blood. [*Seizes him.*]

Jack. Stand off! Let go your hold!

Ber. Your blood shall answer for it.

Swis. Landlord! Susan! Police, I say! Here's a regular scrimmage, and no mistake. Landlord!

Jack. Fool! you are no match for me. [*They struggle, BERTRAM is thrown*] Ha! ha! know me in future as your master.

[*BERTRAM jumps up, and seizes knife from table.*]

Ber. This, then, makes us equal.

Jack. Stand off! Are you mad? Stand off!

Ber. My master! Fool! This to your heart.

[*BERTRAM rushes on JACK BULLY, they struggle, BERTRAM stabs him, general confusion.*]

Jack. Help! I'm murdered! Help. [*Falls.*]

Swis. Here, landlord! Murder! Police! Lay hold of him—don't let him go, hold him fast—murder!

Ber. Heavens! What have I done! Killed him. There's blood upon me. [*They attempt to seize him.*] Stand off, I say!

Swis. Help! Murder! Help!

Ber. He who attempts to stay me, dies! Ah! [*Goes to door.*] They come! the window, then. Stand off! I am a desperate man. [*Escapes by window.*]

Enter LANDLORD and POLICE.

Land. What means this outcry?

Swis. We're all murdered—that is, poor Bully is—there he lies, Bertram did it, he's off.

Land. Quick! pursue the murderer.

[*They lift BULLY.—Form picture.—Scene closes.*]

SCENE II.

A Street.

BERTRAM rushes in as if pursued, L.

Ber. The bloodhounds are at my heels—they track

my steps, I hear their wild shouts; their shouts of joy and exultation at the chase. Hundreds rush to capture one poor miserable being. Cowards that they are, they dare not singly face me. Whither shall I fly, where look for safety and protection, who will befriend me—none. I am, indeed, the outcast of mankind—the blood of him—of him my friend, companion, is still warm upon my hands. What would I not give to recall this deed; how many thousands are there, who repent for years, the work of minutes. They come, I must away—but where! Home!—ha, ha, ha, home. The murderer has no home. Fiends are for ever by his side, and hell stares him in the face. They come, they come—away, away. [*Rushes out R.*]

Enter LANDLORD, POLICE, and MOB, L.

Land. This way he took; we gain upon him, and will take him yet.

Off. He's almost worn out; quick, follow, we lose time

Land. On then, seize the murderer. [*Exeunt shouting R.*]

Enter BILLY SWIZZLE running, a bottle in his hand, L.

Swiz. Oh, dear, I'm quite out of breath. I can't keep up with 'em. Here's a go, poor Billy. I feel the cold steel in my stomach: now this all comes of drinking, but yet people will do it, it comes so natural to them, that even the dear little ladies like a drop on the sly. And as for excuses, some take it because they're dry, some for amusement, some for pleasure, some to pass away the time; some take it (as they say) medicinally, some to drown dull care, to cure the heart-ache, jealousy, crosses in love, scolding wives, squalling brats, and all the other ills this blessed world produces, and who can help liking it. In the morn it washes away dull dreams, at noon its a refresher, in the evening its a comforter, and at night a downright pleasure. But there's only one thing against all these here enjoyments, and that is, people don't know when they've had enough of it, so theo get to fighting and the station-house; but this won't do, I must see the end of this affair. I'll after and see what becomes of Bertram. I'll capture him and get a vote of thanks from the parish, and the free use of the parish pump for the remainder of my life

[*Exit, R.*]

SCENE III.

Interior of Bertram's House.

Same as scene 1st.—GRACE BERTRAM discovered watching children asleep on bed—midnight.

Grace. They sleep. The sweet sleep of innocence, how beautiful it is—peace and quiet possess their bosoms, unruffled by a storm, unconscious of the miseries of life and the ills that await them, the soft and blessed gift of a heart without a stain—of a body unbroken in any fibre by the cares and labours of existence—of a mind without a burden, or an apprehension; it falls down upon our eyelids like the dew of a summer's eve. But, alas! with the first years of life 'tis gone, and lost to us for ever; we may gain joy and satisfaction, glory, splendour, power more than our wildest ambition aspired to, or our eager hopes could grasp; but the sweet sleep of infancy flies from the ardent joys, as well as the bitter cares of mankind—and never, never returns. Once like thee sweet children, thy wretched mother reposed in peace amidst the sweet dream of unbounded felicity and joy; but now, bitter reverse, the sun of my happiness is clouded and set for ever. But hark! what noise breaks the stillness that reigns around? 'Tis he, Bertram!

BERTRAM rushes in and fastens door, &c.

Ber. Yes! Bertram—Henry Bertram, once the gay, proud, honest, Henry Bertram; but now—what, what? I cannot name it.

Grace. Husband, what mean you? Your looks affright me—say—has ought happened?

Ber. Look at me, Grace—tell me, do I look a monster?

Grace. In my eyes you will never change.

Ber. Do you not see it written on my forehead?

Grace. See what?

Ber. My guilt, imprinted by the hand of heaven on my brow.

Grace. Guilt—your guilt.

Ber. My guilt—look, behold! this hand with which I led thee to the altar, see it now stained with human blood.

Grace. Speak, for mercy sake—what has happened husband, what does this mean?

Ber. It means that I—the chosen of thy young heart, whom you have sworn to love and honour—the father of thy children, I am a —

Grace. What!

Ber. Murderer!

Grace. No! No! I'll not believe it.

Ber. The fool cheated, robbed me of all—then struck me to the earth. Maddened by liquor—I knew not what I did—the devil had placed a knife temptingly by my side, and in an evil moment I forgot the laws of heaven and man.

Grace. Oh! Harry, Harry, that I should live to see this day—the blood of a fellow creature on thy head—O, misery! misery! [*Weeps.*]

Ber. My career will soon be o'er. Even now they track my steps—a few short moments and I shall be dragged away to prison.

Grace. Fly husband, fly while you have yet time—away?—go where you will, even to the world's end—I and thy children will follow thee.

Ber. Follow me—live with—clasp me to thy heart. No, no, you could not do it.

Grace. Put me to the proof, and learn how deep is woman's love. [*Noise.*] Hark! I hear a noise—quick, away.

Ber. Whither can I fly—alone—unfriended, penniless—'tis in vain—I'll stay and meet my fate.

Grace. No, no—away! away! I have nought to give thee—yet here—the link that bound us together—the charm that woman values as her life, the dearest gift of man—my wedding ring—[*Gives ring.*] [*Noise.*] Now quick, away! I hear footsteps on the stairs.

Ber. Grace, Grace, too late do I find thy value.

Grace. Nay, away! away!

Ber. But whither?

Grace. To thy native village, there will we join thee, waste not a moment. One kiss, and heaven protect thee.

Ber. You counsel well. I will at once away and await you at the village.

Grace. Stay, stay, one little moment—one kiss unto thy children. [*He kisses them.*] On—last embrace.

Ber. Now fortune favor me. [*Going.*] Ah! it is too late, they are already in the street, at the door—wife, wife, save me, save me! [*Rushes down and clings to GRACE.*]

Grace. They shall tear me peacemeal ere they reach thee.

Ber. A thought strikes me, that window—

Grace. Leads to the stables at the back.

Ber. I can drop on them, 'tis my only chance.

Grace. Quick, away, away!

Ber. Farewell, wife; children, farewell.

Grace. [*Noise.*] Quick, they come. They come—angels guard him.

[*BERNARD escapes by window.—Noise without.*

Grace. They come. H-re, George, stand here and watch thy father, [*Places Boy on table.*] whilst I guard the door. I feel the strength of twenty men circling my veins. They shall not enter until he is safe. [*Holds door.*] I o you see your father.

Child. Yes, mother, he's creeping along the roofs.

Grace. Does anybody see him.

Child. No, mother, I see no one.

Grace. Lie still, my heart; lie still, they come.

Off. [*Without.*] Open the door, admit us instantly.

Grace. [*Holding door.*] Where is your father, now—is he near the end

Child. Yes, mother! almost at the end.

[*Knocking at the door—GRACE holds it, attempts to force it.*

Grace. Heaven grant me strength—where is he now? quick—child—quick.

Child. He's reached the end, he's looking back here mother—mother.

Grace. [*Rushes to window.*] He is about to drop—he waves a last farewell—now he clings—the depth is fearful—he is bewildered—he's gone, gone.

The Door is burst open—LANDLORD, OFFICER, BILLY SWIZZLE and MOB rush in, confusion.

Land. Gone! he has escaped.

Grace. I see him once again—he's safe—ha, ha, ha!

[*Falls with CHILD senseless on the stage—they form Picture round her—Drop falls.*

ACT II.—SCENE I.

A lapse of Two Years is supposed.

The Exterior of a Village Public House.

Picturesque view—Music lively.

GREGORY GROWISE and VILLAGERS discovered drinking at table.

Gre. Aye, aye! you may laugh; but I don't see anything to laugh at—you may know what matrimony is yourselves, one of these days.

1st. Vil. Ha, ha! you're a lucky fellow, Gregory.

Gre. Yes, very; but my luck is rather hard luck. Now take my advice all of you—eat, drink, and be merry while you can, for you may soon get caught in the nets of Cupid, and then its all over.

Enter MRS. GROWISE from house, &c.

Mrs. G. What's that you say, sir?

Gre. That they were all fools not to get married, my love; 'cause they'd be so happy, like you and I, my duck.

Mrs. G. You said nothing of the sort, you good-for-nothing, idle, stupid fellow. Oh! I wish I'd never married you.

Gre. And so do I.

Mrs. G. You do, do you? Was ever woman so treated? This is my thanks, for all the trouble I've taken to make a man of you—this is my return for all I've taught you.

Gre. You've taught me more than I want to know—you've taught me that matrimony is—

Mrs. G. A burden to fools, but a blessing to a sensible man! I wonder I've any patience with you at all.

Gre. I can't say that I ever saw any. Now, my love, don't be in a passion—here's all our friends and neighbours.

Mrs. G. I'm glad of it, for they'll see what a good-for-nothing fellow you are.

Gre. And what a vixen you are. Now, neighbours, we'll have a parting glass.

1st. *Vil.* And then we must away—'tis time we were on the road home.

Gre. Well, if you must and will go, why I can't help it; so here's all your jolly good healths, long lives, good wives, and plenty of 'em.

Mrs. G. Say that again. I'll teach you—

Gre. You always are teaching me, though I'm sure I left school for good ever so long ago.

Mrs. G. And always shall be. Your good healths friends and neighbours, a pleasant evening to you all.

Gre. And don't be such fools as to fall in love, because if you do you may—

Mrs. G. [*Knocking him off stool.*] Fall down.

Vil. Ha, ha, ha! good bye, Gregory, good bye—good bye, Mrs. Growise, good bye. [*Exeunt VILLAGERS, L.*]

Gre. Good bye, my lads, good bye! I wish I was going with them

Mrs. G. I dare say you do, anything to get away from your wife and your work.

Gre. I've never been without the one since I've had the other. If all wives work their husbands as you do me, why—

Mrs. G. What, sir?

Gre. They're a happy lot, that's all.

Mrs. G. What more do you want? Don't your wife take care of you?

Gre. That she certainly does.

Mrs. G. Don't she administer to your comfort?

Gre. She administers too much, sometimes.

Mrs. G. Don't I allow you eighteen pence a week, pocket money?

Gre. But you never let me go out to spend it.

Mrs. G. Go out! You want to run after the women, do you?

Gre. No! I've quite enough of one at home.

Mrs. G. You have, then you shall have a little more. There, get in with you, you idle good-for-nothing—

[*Beats him.*]

Gre. But, I say my love, don't give me such striking proofs of your kindness.

Mrs. G. Go in with you, sir. Work, sir, work.

Gre. So I do, day and night. Oh, murder, murder!

[*Exeunt into house, R. H.*—*BILLY SWIZZLE* sings without, *R. U. L.*]

And the parson drank,
 And the clerk drank,
 And we all sipp'd it,
 And swore there was nothing like beer.

SWIZZLE enters, L.

Here's a dozen and a half of songs for a halfpenny.
 enough to serve a large family all their lives, and sing a
 dozen a day. These here songs makes a covey precious
 dry. I'll have a mug of beer, and see if I can do a little
 business here. House, house!

Enter GREGORY, R.

Gre. Coming, sir, coming.

Swiz. A mug of your best, my covey.

Gre. Old or mild, master? [*Exit GREGORY.*]

Swiz. Draw it mild. Now I'll see if I can pump this
 fellow. The manor-house would be a plummy plant.
 These here songs are a good disguise—many a silver spoon
 they've helped me to.

Re-enter GREGORY.

Gre. The ale, sir, and right good sort. It is my
 wife's own brewing, and she's a good hand at everything.

Swi. [*Drinking.*] Not so bad. Now tell me, my tulip,
 who resides at the manor-house, on the hill yonder.

Gre. Why you must be a stranger not to know that.
 The good Sir George Wormley, every body loves and re-
 spects him.

Swiz. Indeed! Is he married? Who lives there?

Gre. His housekeeper and her two children.

Swiz. He's a bachelor, then?

Gre. I never heard of his being married, which proves
 him to be a sensible man. His housekeeper——

Swiz. Who is she?

Gre. That no one knows. She's lived there these two
 years, but who, what, or where she came from, not even my
 wife can tell.

Swiz. Oh, I see, a ba onet, a housekeeper, and children.
 A common affair in town. How many servants are there?

Gre. Two men and two maids. [*Aside.*] Now what's
 that to him?

Swiz. Is he considered rich?

Gre. And no mistake. Such splendid furniture

Swiz. And lots of plates—eh?

Gre. Lor, bless you, three or four kitchens full.

Swiz. I mean silver.

Gre. I believe you, silver and gold.

Swiz. That will do. Here's your jolly good health.

Gre. Thank yor sir; the same to you, though I've nothing to drink it in.

Swiz. Here, lay hold

Gre. You're very kind; but I don't know what to say, my wife won't allow me.

Swiz. Not allow you! Ha, ha, ha! Here, sit down and drink away, never care for what your wife says.

Gre. Not care! She makes me.

Swiz. Then why put up with it?

Gre. She knocks me down if I don't.

Swiz. You're a fool.

Gre. Thank you, sir.

Swiz. Now, take my advice, be master, don't mind what she says. Never let a woman wear the breeches.

Gre. But how can I help it?

Swiz. Drink away. [*He drinks.*] Pluck up a spirit. If she hits you, hit her again.

Gre. I've a great mind; but she's such a dragon.

Swiz. Never mind—once conquer her, and you're master for life.

Gre. I'll try it! I will! I'll say to her—

Mrs G. [*Within.*] Gregory, you lazy fellow, where are you?

Gre. There she is! What am I to do?

Swiz. Remain where you are.

Gre. Will you stand by me, then?

Swiz. Like a trump, my boy.

Gre. O, lord! Here she is.

Enter Mrs. GROWER from house.

Mrs. G. So, sir, I've found you at last; and drinking too! What did I tell you?

Gre. Who cares what you said. I'm with a friend.
[*Aside.*] Don't leave me.

Mrs. G. Can I believe my ears? Are you mad?

Gre. No, I'm come to my senses, and I'll be master.
[*Aside.*] Will that do?

Swiz. All's right; keep it up, my tulip!

Mrs. G. You will, will you. Now, sir, come here directly.

Gre. I sha'nt stir a peg.

Mrs. G. I'll soon make you, then.

Swiz. At her, my boy, now's your time.

Gre. Keep off. I don't want to hurt you. You'd better not—

Mrs. G. Do you think to frighten me? This is evil counsel! But I'll soon bring you to reason.

Swiz. Don't be afraid. Now, or never.

Gre. I will be master. So there, there.

[*Music—a fight ensues between them—the table and forms are upset—SWIZZLE stands laughing, and scene closes.*]

SCENE II.

Road leading to the Village.

Music—BERTAM staggers in L. miserably clad, exhausted by fatigue, he falls.

Ber. My native home, once more I greet thee; and on thy bosom, exhausted by fatigue and hunger, will lie me down and die. Die the death of a dog, on the cold earth, unfriended. No hand to smooth my dying pillow: no words of joy and hope hereafter. In yonder churchyard lies my poor mother. Thank heaven she cannot see me now. The thoughts of former days crowd thick upon me. Grace, dear Grace, what is thy fate? Two years ago, I left thee to beggary and despair, to become the thing I am. O, misery! what punishment is there half so terrible as that inflicted by one's own conscience! 'Tis over! I feel life waning fast, my tongue cleaves to my mouth; a drop of water, my life for a drop of water; but one to save my wretched life. Grace, wife, children, I see you hovering round me—but not one hand to save me. Drink, for the love of heaven, some drink. [*Faints*]

[*SWIZZLE sings without, R. H.*

Drink, drink, drive every care away;

Pull away, boys, at spirits or porter.

Drink, drink, while you can get a drop;

Blow the blue devils, we'll give 'em no quarter.

Enter SWIZZLE, R.

Swiz. A fig for the blue devils say I, or for the blue

jackets either. Here's a remedy against all evil. [*Shows flask.*] I persuaded that spooney to fill this with the best brandy, unknown to his wife; and, in course, I forgot to pay for it. This is a drop of the real thing, and no mistake. The poor man's comforter. Holloa! What have we here? A dead man, as I live. I'll put fresh life in him. Here, old covey, take a drop of this.

Ber. [*Rising.*] Thanks, friends, thanks.

Swiz. He drinks like a fish! Well, old fellow, how are you now?

Ber. The blood again flows at my heart! How can I thank you, friend!

Swiz. Thanks! What for. A drop of brandy?

Ber. You have put new life into me—I had laid me down to die.

Swiz. Never say *die*, old fellow.

Ber. That voice. How familiar it sounds. We have met before.

Swiz. Very likely. "We met, 'twas in a crowd." And what, if we have, old fellow

Ber. Your name?

Swiz. An uncommon pretty one—Billy Swizzle, very much at your service.

Ber. 'Tis as I thought! Do you not recognise me?

Swiz. Can't say that I do.

Ber. Has time so changed me? But how can I wonder? My name, perhaps, may be familiar?

Swiz. What is it?

Ber. Henry Bertram!

Swiz. Henry Bertram; Well, I never! Who'd have thought of seeing you again!

Ber. 'Tis strange you stumbled on my path.

Swiz. I'm glad I did though, for your sake. But how has the world been using you?

Ber. Let my appearance answer. I have no home to lay my head in. No money to procure a morsel of food. I am a starving beggar.

Swiz. Then you're the very fellow I wanted to meet with. Join me, and I'll set you going again like a gentleman. What say you?

Ber. Anything is preferable to starvation. In what way can I assist you?

Swiz. You see these here songs?

Ber. Well?

Swiz. I goes round the country with them, and contrive to pick up a little useful information, where there's a good plant, with full particulars of servants, money, plate. You understand? Many's the good thing they've helped me to.

Ber. A burglary?

Swiz. That's an ugly name that genteel folks give it. It's merely relieving other people of what they don't want—The manor house, on the hill.

Ber. The manor house! Here, in my native village; I know it well; each turning is familiar to me. Many and many a time, in my days of childhood, have I rambled over that old house.

Swiz. Then you're the very man! What say you to the plant this night?

Ber. It shall be done—there's my hand on't. If fortune favors us we are made men. Have you any money?

Swiz. A trifle.

Ber. Come then, to the village, I must have food and drink, drink.

Swiz. As much as you like, my boy, come on.

Ber. There we'll arrange our plans, and drink success to this adventure. Drink! 'twill raise our courage, and fit us for the task. 'Twill make a steady hand, and a stout heart, for what we dare not think on. [*Music—Exeunt, &c.*]

SCENE III.

Gardens of the Manor House.

Enter SIR GEORGE WORMLEY and KEEPER, U. E. L.

Sir G. Let care be taken to prevent a repetition of this outrage on my preserves.

Keep. I will, Sir George.

Sir G. I would not be hard upon the poor; my purse is ever open to real distress, yet I will not tamely submit to have my preserves poached upon. Some suspicious characters have lately been seen in the neighbourhood, you say?

Keep. Yes, Sir George.

Sir G. See that they are watched; and let the offenders be brought to justice. Remember, and attend to my instructions.

Keep. I will pay every attention, Sir George. [*Exit, L.*]

Sir G. With what evils and annoyances is this life plagued? Be a man ever so good, generous and just, it

will not protect him from the outrage of the wicked ! But here comes one, whose presence banishes the temporary troubles of this life ; whose piety, goodness, and resignation, cast a halo round her. My act of charity to her was one of the best deeds I ever did. She's here.

Enter GRACE BERTRAM and CHILDREN, E. H.

Grace. Sir George, I have again to thank you for another favor—your kind present to my children.

Sir G. Nay, nay, name it not, good mistress Grace.

Grace. I can never repay you, sir. But for you, I should long ere this have been numbered with the dead, and these poor children left to starve.

Sir G. Think not of the past, I pray—look forward to days of joy and happiness.

Grace. For me there is no joy ; no happiness, no hope. The past is fearful—the future blank and hopeless. This is the anniversary of your kindness.

Sir G. My duty, as a christian ; I did no more.

Grace. You did what few would have done. You found a woman and two children starving ; nay, almost dying, vagrants on the high road, and took pity on us, made us what we are. How can we repay you ? The whole study of our lives were insufficient.

Sir G. You should try and banish these painful subjects. I would see you gay, cheerful, happy.

Grace. Happy ; *That* I can never be ! The thoughts of one—his fate is continually before my eyes.

Sir G. I know thy story, and sincerely pity thee. But he, whom you call husband, is, indeed, unworthy of you.

Grace. Had you but known him when he was all truth, honor, and goodness, you would not be surprised that I still cling to him—cannot banish him from my heart.

Sir G. But his conduct since has rendered him unworthy of a place there.

Grace. Perhaps not ; let us not judge him unknowingly. When we parted, after that dreadful deed, 'twas at this village we were to meet. We travelled day and night, begged our way from door to door, until the wished for haven was obtained, and then found him not. Two years have now elapsed, and his fate is still unknown.

Sir G. But, I promise you, on the morrow, to institute enquiries concerning him, and, if possible, to find and succour him.

Grace. Bless you, sir, bless you ! What can a poor broken-hearted woman say to thank you.

Sir G. I am more than repaid by your care and attention in your capacity of housekeeper; my comforts, wishes, are all forestalled—I only wish to see you truly happy.

Grace. I will try, sir, though 'tis hard to smile when the heart is sad; but my little ones here, must in their youthful mirth, make up for their mother's sadness.

Sir G. That they do, many and many an hour have I spent in raptures at their youthful mirth and follies; but come, follow me to the manor house, and remember on the morrow we commence our search for your lost husband. Follow me, good Grace. [*Exit R.*]

Grace. May heaven bless you! and children, let his kindness be graven on your hearts in future years when I am taken from you, serve him as faithfully as man can serve, guard him in the time of danger, lay down your very lives for him, and let your poor father's fate be a warning to you; try by your conduct through life to redeem the good name he has forfeited all claim to. Come, let us in. [*Exeunt, R. H.*]

SCENE IV.

A Country Road.

Enter HENRY BERTRAM and BILLY SWIZZLE, L.

Ber. All is settled then, we make the attempt at the back window; that appears the easiest part, what think you?

Swiz. Can't be better, my tulip—if we don't do the crack in the most gentlemanly-like manner may I never moisten my lips again.

Ber. But, hark ye! no blood is to be shed.

Swiz. By no manner of means, that is if we can help it; but if they should come down upon us, and there's no other way of getting off, why damme let's have a pop at 'em say I.

Ber. In that case only—let us divide the pistols; but unless to save our lives they must not be used.

Swiz. I'm agreeable—this is our first job together—success attend it.

Ber. You have everything ready.

Swiz. All's right, my boy; here are the pretty creatures that defy locks, bolts and bars.

Ber. Come on, then ; we have no time to lose, so to work.

Smiz. And after that, if I ever get drunk again. I will for the next three weeks, to work my covey, the devil and his good luck go with us. [*Exeunt, R. H. Music.*]

Enter GREGORY and MRS. GROWISE, L. H.

Gre. But I tell you its all nonsense.

Mrs. G. Don't talk to me, I know best ; those men had some motive in asking all about the hall, the servants, and the plate ; so we'll go and tell them all about it.

Gre. But they'll be in bed, my love.

Mrs. G. Then we'll awake them ; now don't talk to me, I will have my own way, you know.

Gre. Yes, I know you will ; but won't the morning do, let's go home to bed and have a comfortable snooze.

Mrs. G. No, sir, I will not ; we must go at once.

Gre. But, my love !

Mrs. G. Don't stand shivering there, wasting time. Get along with you.

Gre. But I'd rather not.

Mrs. G. Do you hear ? Get along with you to the hell.

Gre. But I'd rather go home to bed.

Mrs. G. I'll bed you ! go along, I say.

Gre. But I'm so sleepy.

Mrs. G. Then I'll awaken you—there, sir. [*Strikes him*]

Gre. Well, I'm going—here goes.

[*He attempts to run off, MRS. GROWISE brings him back, strikes him, and after running round the stage, pursues him off in the direction of the hall, R. H.*]

SCENE V.

A Scene divided into Four Parts.

No. 1.—*GRACE discovered reading, Children sleeping.*

No. 2.—*SIR G. WORMLEY'S Chamber. Sir George discovered writing.*

No. 3 — *Exterior of Manor House, with Front Door View of Gardens, by Moonlight.*

No. 4.—*Room in Manor House. Music to open Scene.*

Grace. I cannot read, in vain my mind tries to occupy itself with the words before me ! 'Tis useless—a weight o'erpowers me—a dread of some dire calamity, vain, in-

distinct, unaccountable, oppresses my brain, and makes me almost fear to look around. Oh, Bertram! Bertram! What is thy fate? Where art thou now?

[Goes to children's bed, and looks at them.]

Sir G. There, my will is at last completed, and in the morn shall be properly attested. I have provided for Grace Bertram and her children, so that they shall not again know the reverses of this life. Now I'll think of bed. *[Collects papers.]*

Grace. How beautiful they look! Could Bertram but behold them now—his image—his very image! Grant, Heaven! that I may see him once again.

Sir G. To-morrow I'll ride over to the next town, and institute inquiries for this worthless rascal, Bertram; 'twill be a satisfaction to poor Grace even to know the worst.

[Noise heard as of people breaking into house.—

The window in division No. 4 is gently opened, and BERTRAM appears with dark lantern, looks cautiously round, and gets in, followed by BILLY SWIZZLE.

[Music.]

Ber. All's right, not a soul stirring! Be cautious for your life, and follow me!

Swiz. All right, my tulip; I'm after you, as quiet as a mouse and as light as a grasshopper.

Sir G. These depredators that have been seen prowling about must be looked after; the quiet and repose of our peaceful village must not be disturbed.

Ber. The cupboard should be somewhere here.

Grace. I thought I heard a noise—how wildly my heart beats—no—all's quiet.

Swiz. They're all snug asleep—this is an easier job than I reckoned on.

Ber. Be cautious! what cupboard's this? Lend me the bar.

GREGORY GROWISE and his wife appear in garden.

Gre. Now wife, don't be stupid; what's the good of knocking the people up for nothing.

Mrs. G. I'll knock you down. I'm determined to put them on their guard; besides, I thought I saw the two men pass us as we came along.

Gre. The shadow of the trees merely—you'll only be laughed at, coming here at this time of night—I'm so sleepy.

Mrs. G. Then wake yourself up by knocking at the door.

Ber. [*Breaking open cupboard door.*] The prize is found, here's the plate, quick! the bag.

Swiz. O, crikey! this is the sort of thing you don't come across every day.

Grace. If Sir George should succeed in his enquiries—what happiness it will be—'tis strange, I cannot rest to-night.

Ber. Quick! the bag, we have no time to trifle.

Gre. Well, if I must, here goes; but mind its all your fault. [*Knocks at door.*]

Sir G. What noise is that, and at this time of night too?

Grace. My fears did not deceive me, there is some danger—perhaps robbers. I'll alarm the house—the bell. [*Rings the alarm bell.*]

Ber. By heavens! we are discovered, take what we've got! away, away! the pistol.

Sir G. I'll go down and seek the cause of this intrusion. [*Exit.*]

Swiz. I'm off like a shot.

[*BILLY gets on table and escapes by window—BERTHEAM is about to follow—SIR GEORGE on stairs.*]

Ber. Curses! some one comes, where shall I hide? Ah!

Sir G. Help! robbers, thieves, help! [*Rushes down stairs and seizes BERTHEAM.*] Villain, I have thee.

Grace [*On top of stairs.*] Help! murder! help!

Mrs. G. I hear screams within—see, some one drops from the window; seize him, Gregory.

Gre. Help me to hold him, then.

[*SIR GEORGE struggling with BERTHEAM.*
Yield, ruffian, yield.

Ber. Let go your hold, or by heaven I'll fire.

Sir G. Never; help, help.

Ber. This then in self-defence. [*Shoots him.*]

Mrs. GROWISE and GREGORY drag in BILLY.

Gre. and Mrs. G. We've got him; help, help.

Sir G. I'm shot, murdered.

Ber. How then to escape. Ah, what do I see.

[*Meets GRACE.*]

Grace. [*Rushing down.*] Husband.

Ber. Wife.

Grace. Murderer!

[*SERVANTS rush in—Mrs GROWISE and GREGORY hold BILLY, struggling and calling for help.*]

Picture formed, and Act Drop Falls.

ACT III.—SCENE I.

Exterior of the Court of Justice.

*Music—Crowd assembled, waiting about the door—
People enter from court.*

1st Off. Well, how goes on the trial?

2nd Off. 'Tis nearly over. One has already pleaded guilty.

1st Off. Pleased guilty.

2nd Off. Yes; he who committed the murder. On his wife being placed in the witness box, he shouted guilty, my lord, guilty, and fell on the floor. It was a fearful sight.

1st Off. And his wife, poor thing, she is much to be pitied.

2nd Off. That she is.

Enter GREGORY GROWISE, and WIFE, from Court, c. D.

Gre. 'Pon my life I think I did that rather well; gave my evidence like a trump; I never felt of so much importance before.

Mrs. G. Or looked so contemptible.

Gre. Mrs. Growise, is that the way you address a man who has just been in conversation with the Lord Chief Justice?

Mrs. G. And made himself the laughing stock of the whole court.

Gre. Laughing stock, Mrs. Growise? Then the court shewed a great want of sense, madam, in laughing at a man who prevented the robbery, and captured one of the villains.

Mrs. G. And, but for whose idleness and stupidity, and the trouble I had to get you to the house, the murder would never have taken place.

Gre. That's my thanks; after all I've done, this is all the thanks I get. I expected, madam, you would have been proud of me.

Mrs. G. Proud of you?

Gre. Yes! of my valour, my bravery, my heroism. What a world this is! Many a man has been made a general, or a duke, or at least got the thanks of the

country, (though that don't go for much) that ain't done half so much as I did.

Mrs. G. Get along you stupid fellow.

Gre. Very well, madam, very well, when it is too late you'll find my worth. I'll turn soldier. I'll devote myself to my queen.

Mrs. G. Your wife, sir, is *your* queen.

Gre. Yes, she certainly *reigns* over me—there's no mistake about that. But I'll rebel—I'll have a revolution. I'm a brave man, I am convinced I am; I am *sure* I am, there can't be a shadow of a doubt about it! I feel—

Mrs. G. Do you? Then, there, I'll put down the revolution with a strong hand. [*Strikes him.*]

1st Off. The trial's over; they are found guilty, but not sentenced. The court has broken up, and see, here comes the murderer's wife.

Mrs. G. Poor thing. Hush! Stand back!

GRACE BERTRAM enters from the Court, and gazes vacantly around her.

Grace. They tell me it is over—over, all over! Where is he gone? I see him not, yet he is still before me. There; yes, there! He looks upon me—he smiles. The smile I loved so well. See, he beckons me to follow. I come, Bertram, I come. 'Tis gone—gone! Where am I? Where—why do you all gaze upon me so? I do not know you.

Mrs. G. Poor thing, my heart bleeds for her.

Gre. So does mine.

Grace. Hush, he's there—the stern judge arrayed in all the pomp of law. How he frowns upon him. Hark! they question him. Guilty or not guilty. Hush—he speaks. Not guilty, my lord. A lie—a foul lie—said with a firm voice, and an unflinching eye, right in the face of justice. The laws' mockery, for the guilty to avail themselves of its quibbles. Can such things be? Hush—they call the witness—his wife. The wife arrayed against the husband. But see the prisoner, though he can look justice in the face, he cannot bear her gaze. Fear not, she will not bear witness against thee.

Mrs. G. Poor thing, her reason wanders.

Grace. Hark! that shout. Guilty! Guilty! The proud and strong man is grovelling in the dust, weighed with the good man's blood. Take him away, he cannot bear

to look upon her—pity her. You do—there's tears—tears—'tis real pity, when justice weeps. The trial's over—remove the woman. See how her eyes are fixed on him. Take him away—away.

Mrs. G. Come with me; let me lead you home.

Grace. Home! I have no home. I am an outcast from the world. Do not touch me, or I shall destroy you. E'en he, the good old man, must suffer—through me—my brain will burst. I know not what I do! Where am I? Tell me—pity me.

Gre. I'm not a brave man. I withdraw the sentiment I'll have a good cry as soon as I get home.

Mrs. G. Trust to me, I will take care of you, and conduct you to your children.

Grace. Children, my poor children. You have touched the chord that vibrates to my heart. Now, I remember all—yes all. The Court—trial—Bertram. Let me see him but once again.

Mrs. G. Lean on me. Come, take a short repose, you will be better then, and if you wish it, shall see your husband.

Grace. See him—yes—once again—one long, last farewell, and then, death—death—I'll welcome thee.

[*Mrs. G. leads out GRACE, the others following slowly, GREGORY crying.*]

SCENE II.

Interior of a Prison.

BILLY SWIZZLE asleep on straw — HENRY BERTEAM pacing stage.

Ber. So to this am I come at last; a prison—gibbet. Well, well, my career, though short, has been a merry one. I have enjoyed life in every state—from the height of domestic happiness, to the lowest villainy, and now I must die, loaded with the curses of all. Oh! man—man—how few are there who, amidst their wild and fearful actions, dare to look forward to the end; and after that, the future, upon what a fearful abyss do how many thousands stand.

Swiz. (asleep). I tell you I've a great objection to be hung, I don't fancy it.

Ber. Poor fool, I cannot but pity thee—thy coward

nature renders thee an object of compassion. A brave heart is the best companion in the world, it neither sinks under trouble, or mounts in the air like a feather, at a puff of good fortune, but enables its possessor to enjoy all the sweets of life, without fear of its reverse. Yes; a brave heart is a rich treasure, it carries a man thro' all climes, and makes every place a home to him.

Swiz (waking). Now be quiet, will you. Hollo! what's all this—where was I? Where am I? Ah! Bertram, any news?

Ber. None.

Swiz. Oh dear, that's a relief.

Ber. From what? Suspense is worse than death.

Swiz. I'm afraid they'll keep us in suspense after death.

Ber. I know my fate, nothing can save me, I must die.

Swiz. Die! that's the ugliest little word in the dictionary; and I—

Ber. You—you have a chance.

Swiz. That's better than nothing. A chance!

Ber. Of transportation for life.

Swiz. That's unpleasant again. I can't say I'm transported at the idea.

Ber. A living death—a life of toil the most severe a man can undergo—without the slightest glimmer of hope—a dark, void, desolate blank, whose only relief is death.

Swiz. What a remarkable pretty picture. Oh! why didn't I stick to honesty? What would my blessed old mother say to see me now. I remember the copies she used to set me, "Honesty is the best policy." Oh dear! Oh dear!

Ber. Like the rest of mankind, too late we see the folly of our ways. Some one comes.

Swiz. To put a settler upon us. I feel already dead and buried.

Enter OFFICER, D. F.

Ber. Well, sir, you come to tell me to prepare for death.

Offi. I do, you are to die to-morrow at eight, there is no hope.

Ber. I had none, sir; in my heart the rays of hope had long been extinguished. My sentence is most just. You will see with what a firm heart I shall pay the penalty of life for life.

Swiz. And me sir, I am not—that is—

Off. You are spared.

Swiz. I breathe again. I'm spared.

Off. Your life is—you are to be sent out of the country for life.

Swiz. I'm sure it's not worth while to take all that trouble with me. Well, I'm resigned; anything's better than a walk in the air.

Off. You must follow me, your companion must now be left alone.

Swiz. I'll follow—good bye, Bertram, my boy, good bye. I wish you was going with me that I do, you're such a plucky fellow. It was a damned unfortunate job, my boy, but keep up your spirits, it's a long journey without any end to it, but it may be all right and comfortable when you get there, so don't be down hearted; good bye, my boy—good bye—good bye. *[Exit, crying, D. F.]*

Off. Some friends are without, of whom you must now take your last farewell. I will send them in.

[Exit D. F.]

Ber. Friends—friends—how strange that word grates on my heart—I have none. Ah! 'tis Grace; it must be she—even here she seeks me, loaded as I am with guilt, comes like an angel to smooth my path into another world. Woman, woman, what a lesson do you not teach us. Thine heart once given, no treatment, misery, or guilt, can change thee. You cling unto us like the ivy to the wall, until it is cast down for ever. She comes.

Grace (without). Where is he—let me see him. Harry—husband.

Enter GRACE BERTRAM, D. F.

Ber. Wife, *[they embrace]* once more I hold thee to my heart—Oh! what a wreck is here. Do not look on me—I cannot bear it—thine eyes would surely kill me.

Grace. Say not so—you are to me the same—nought but death can sever us.

Ber. And soon we must part too—part for ever!

Grace. No, no! I have lived but for thee, and will die with thee!

Ber. Say not so—dear Grace—though you would die for me—you have others still more dear to live for.

Grace. Our children!

Ber. Thy children, wife—I dare not call them mine—take them to some distant clime—where the name of their

father and his infamy may never reach their ears. Even you, dear Grace, must for ever banish me and my sad fate from thy recollection.

Grace. Never! never! Sleeping or waking thine image will be before my eyes.

Ber. Then let us hope, that when the penalty of my crime is paid, we may meet again.

Grace. In heaven!

Ber. Oh! wife—when I gaze on thee, the crime for which I die is slight compared with the treatment thou hast received.

Grace. 'Tis all forgotten—past—forgiven. Is there no hope! no way to save thee!

Ber. None, wife—none! For the murderer there is no hope!

Grace. And you must die!

Ber. To-morrow—and 'twill be welcome! I could not live the guilty thing I am.

Enter OFFICER, D. F.—OFFICER. B. H.

Off. The time for your interview is expired. You must part.

Grace. No, no! I will not leave thee.

Ber. Dear wife you must, you must! 'tis useless—do not unman me; farewell, for ever! Heaven in its mercy will guard thee and thy children.

Grace. No, no! I will not leave thee—they shall not tear me from you.

Off. Madam—you must, indeed, leave.

Grace. Why! wherefore? Are we not bound for life—there is no law to sever us—mercy, sir, mercy! do not part us. I'll make no noise—I will not even speak—

Off. I dare not—I have already exceeded my duty in allowing you to remain so long.

Ber. Go dear wife—there, sir—take her—pray take her—this—this is worse than death!

Grace. I will not go—have mercy! Bertram, husband! I will not leave thee—villain! let me go—Bertram—Bertram—

[Officer carries GRACE off screaming, BERTRAM buries his face in his hands, and scene changes.]

SCENE III.

A Street in the Village.*Enter GREGORY GROWISE, R. H.*

Well, here I am—dressed in my best. All spick-and-span new—going to see the execution—with one and sixpence in my pocket to have a jollification with. For once in my life, Mrs. Growise, has allowed me to come out alone, so I am determined to make the most of it, and enjoy myself. Bless me, how the people are flocking to see the sight! here they come in shoals.

The Villagers pass across the stage from R. H.

And as I live, here comes a very pretty girl, and all alone. Gregory, Gregory, will your gallantry allow her to go alone, unprotected? Certainly not. And as Mrs. G. is out of the way, I'll imagine myself a bachelor again.

Enter SUSAN, R. H.

Gre. What, Susan, is it you? Who'd have thought of seeing you? How d'ye do?

Susan. Lor, Gregory! Is it you? How d'ye do?

Gre. Well this is delightful! Why I haven't seen you since I left the "Pig in Pattens." I suppose you're going to see the execution.

Susan. O yes—every body is going—and no one will pity him—I'm sure.

Gre. It's very dreadful. But are you going to venture alone?

Susan. I'm not at all afraid.

Gre. Beauty and innocence is always safe. Eh! Susan?

Susan. Lor, Mr. Gregory, I had no one to go with me.

Gre. Then mankind in general ought to be ashamed of themselves to allow so pretty a girl to want company. Come, tuck yourself under my arm, I'll take care of you.

Mrs. GROWISE enters at back, R. H.

Mrs. Gro. [Aside] Will you, indeed?

Gre. Don't you remember the fun we had at the "Pig in Pattens," and our Sunday rambles.

Susan. That I do—and how you used to make love to me in the beer cellar.

Gre. And how the missus caught us there one day, and gave me a precious good thrashing, I haven't forgot that.

Susan. But, lor, Gregory—I heard you were married.

Gre. Married! Do I look like a married man?

Mrs. Geo. [*Aside*] You will presently sir!

Susan. Well, I can't say you're altered.

Gre. Altered! Not a bit—I still love you as much as ever. Those pretty eyes of yours, Susan, have made such an impression.

Mrs. Geo. [*Aside*] I'll make an impression presently.

Susan. Now, Mr. Gregory, don't go on with your nonsense. I'm not sure you aint married—you men are such deceivers.

Gre. If I am married, I only wish my wife was here.

Mrs. Geo. [*Aside*] You do—do you?

Gre. Married! while you live Susan? never. But come along, lets go and see the sight, and then we'll take a stroll.

Susan. Very well, but you must promise to behave yourself. No nonsense mind.

Gre. Nonsense, think of the "Pig in Pattens," the beer cellar. Just one kiss for old acquaintance sake, and then you'll say—

Mrs. G. (*striking him*). Take that, you rascal!

Gre. The devil—no—my wite—run, Susan, run.

[*SUSAN screams and runs out, L. H.*]

Mrs. G. I'll "Pig in Pattens" you, I will.

Gre. Here goes for a run for it, then.

[*Runs out L.*]

Mrs. G. I'm after you, sir.

[*Exit L.*]

Enter GRACE and CHILDREN.

Grace. The village is all alive—dressed in their best, with smiling faces, to see—Heavens, I cannot name it. What do I here? They thought to keep me safe—to keep me from him. They tried to deceive me, but they could not my heart whispered the dreadful words. The hour is come, and execution rang in mine ears. Why did I drag these with me? Must they witness his dreadful fate? and hark—hark! [*Bell Tolls.*] Listen, children, 'tis thy father's death-knell; and see a long procession winds its way along the road. They curse him—curse him!—the good man's murderer. And there—there— I cannot see—my eyes grow dim. There is a figure in the midst—a rope about his neck. My brain whirls round. Yes, 'tis he! Bertram, Bertram—I come—I come.

[*Rushes out followed by Children, L. H.*]

SCENE IV.

A Picture Representing the Execution of Bertram.

A Scaffold with BERTRAM, Priest, Executioner, &c., &c. surrounded by Soldiers, Officers, &c.—a crowd of villagers at back—a scream without, and GRACE rushes in followed by her Children, and falls senseless at the foot of the Scaffold.

Picture — Music and Clouds Descend — The Scene Changes to Interior of Bertram's house, same as Scene I.

BERTRAM discovered asleep on bed.

Ber. Mercy! mercy! I die. My throat—I cannot breathe. Ah! where am I? What's this? My house—home. Yes, it is—it is. Grace—Grace—quick—tell me I do but dream. Grace—Grace.

Enter GRACE and CHILDREN, &c.

Grace. Husband, I am here.

Ber. Alive—well—Heaven I thank thee. It is but a dream, a frightful, hideous dream, but drawing forth true characters of what may be. Wife, I am saved—saved by the hand of Heaven. Henceforth I live but for thee and our children.

Grace. Bertram, what words are these? O, joy! what happiness! Our prayers are heard, and you are saved.

Ber. I am, indeed, dear wife. Let us forget the past, think only of the joy the future may produce.

[Knocking without.]

Grace. George, see who it is at the door. Dear husband, that my heart could utter the joy I feel. Who's this? A stranger.

Enter LAWYER.

Law. I seek one Henry Bertram.

Ber. I am he, sir.

Law. Sir, I congratulate you; fortune has been most bountiful—your uncle, Miles Bertram, Esq., deceased, by his will, appoints you sole heir to his estate. A goodly fortune, sir, two thousand pounds per annum.

Grace. Husband, children, kind providence, how can we thank you!

Ber. Do I again dream? No!

drunkard, beggar, debauchee, by the gift of heaven and man, reformed, enriched, and, will henceforth be a just, good, honourable man. Wife, children, we are truly blessed.

Grace. Blessed indeed—once again what my young heart had pictured thee! Our happiness is now complete—that is (*advancing*)

If you approve (*to audience*). But let me say,
 One word upon the subject of our play ;
 Our care has been to picture unto you,
 A dissipated man, and woman true.
 To shew the misery, alas ! the fatal end,
 To which intemperance must always tend.
 Ye Bachelors, forego the glass, before you laid,
 And seek instead, a loving, virtuous maid.
 Ye married men who are inclined to roam,
 Learn that true pleasure's only found at home ;
 Bless'd with fond children, and a faithful wife,
 Think on the moral of our "DREAM OF LIFE."

END.